

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING**

January 27, 2009

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on January 27, 2009 pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Committee Chairman, Dale Venturini, Commissioners Jeff Hirsh, Paul MacDonald and Patrick Butler.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill, Kim Keough, Ken Mancuso and Betty Sullivan, RICCA; Martha Sheridan, Neil Schriever and Kristn Adamo, PWCVB; Tim Muldoon, John McGinn, Arlene Oliva, Amanda Marzullo and Nancy Beauchamp, RICC; Larry Lepore, Cheryl Cohen, Lisa Coelho, Jodi Duclos and Eleanor SanAntonio, Dunkin' Donuts Center; Mark Brodner, RI Tourism; Evan Smith and Tim Walsh, Newport CVB; Steve Hahl, VMA; Rob Cartwright, Westin; Rebecca Ebeling, Boys & Girls Club and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.

Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:35 pm. Ms. Venturini noted that there were new faces in the group and asked everyone introduce themselves. Ms. Venturini wished Mr. Cartwright, the new General Manager of the Westin, great success. Noting that the minutes of the December meeting had been distributed Ms. Venturini

asked for a motion to approve. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. MacDonald and seconded by Mr. Butler it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the December meeting.

PROVIDENCE/WARWICK CVB

Ms. Sheridan noted that neither she nor Mr. Schriever will be available for next month's meeting. Ms. Sheridan updated the Committee regarding the Brown Medical School's Department Head Ambassador program. Ms. Sheridan noted that the Chamber of Commerce and Rhode Island Tourism Division are also participating in the program.

Mr. Schriever began the PWCVB's Power Point Presentation. Mr. Schriever reported on year to date actual bookings vs the goals set in the 2009 Marketing Plan. He noted that year to date confirmed bookings are 33% to the annual goal. Mr. Schriever said that meeting planners and organizations are cutting back and are reluctant to commit because of the economy. He said that decisions are being postponed. Mr. Schriever stated that the sales team exceeded the client contact goals by making 197 prospecting calls as well as attending trade shows and conferences. Mr. Schriever reported on client events sponsored by the CVB. Mr. Schriever stated that the sports marketing team continues to identify target audiences requiring a sports venue and participates in tradeshow and industry meetings such as TEAMS. Mr. Schriever asked Kristen Adamo to

present a new marketing and advertising campaign. Ms. Adamo said that the campaign “One Tank Meetings” is aimed at attracting groups and travelers to our destination that live within a 300 mile radius. Ms. Adamo distributed printed material and noted that the CVB was able to purchase the web addresses. She noted that we are less than one tank of gas away from New York, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and Maine. Ms. Adamo stated that with some creative thinking we will be able to stimulate bookings. Mr. Schriever reported that the hotels have stepped up to help and are distributing sample ads. Mr. Schriever noted that short term corporate business has come to a halt. Mr. Schriever reported that Cavalia was here for a site inspection and noted that this group began discussions with Mark Brodner of the Tourism Division who turned it over to the CVB. Mr. Schriever also stated that the Unitarian Universalists visited Providence hotels, the Dunkin’ Donuts Center and the Convention Center for an event in June 2014. He said that the group would be great for us because they would use both facilities as well as area hotels. Ms. Adamo reported that the Dunkin’ Donuts Center was the center spread in Sports Travel Magazine. Mr. MacDonald noted that the Boys & Girls Club was sponsoring a Golf Expo at the Convention Center in February. He asked Ms. Ebeling to say a few words about the event. Ms. Ebeling thanked Mr. MacDonald for inviting her to the meeting. Ms. Ebeling reported that the Boys & Girls Club are not only producing the event but will be the recipients of the profits. Ms. Ebeling noted the great support that the club has received from the City and the Convention Center. She stated that

they are hoping for 10,000 in attendance. Mr. MacDonald encouraged attendance of the Expo and stated that this is a great cause and the kids need our support.

DUNKIN' DONUTS CENTER

Ms. Venturini asked Mrs. Cohen to begin her presentation. Mrs. Cohen stated that sales of sponsorship and signage at the Dunk are going well. Ms. Cohen noted that contracts have been signed with three new companies, Ketel One, Heineken and Pabst Blue Ribbon. She also noted that Narragansett, WJAR NBC, Coors and Budweiser had renewed their contracts. Still in negotiation are RI National Guard and Tufts Health Plan. Ms. Duclos reported that the party suite sales are going well. She noted that there is suite availability for select performances of the Circus, Monster Jam, Stars on Ice and the Harlem Globetrotters. Ms. Cohen reported that space in the restaurant is being rented for parties. She said that she has been working with Ms. Sullivan and Ms. SanAntonio on a new revenue source. She said that room dividers have been ordered that will separate the restaurant into different sections that can be rented for parties. Ms. Cohen reported that the Providence Bruins have been great partners for the party suites. Ms. Venturini reported that the legislature is considering a tax on ticket sales. She asked Ms. Cohen if that would have a negative impact on the Dunk. Ms. Cohen stated that we do not control ticket prices. Ms. Cohen said that Midget Car Racing will be another family friendly event and the promoter is trying

to keep the pricing affordable. Ms. Cohen presented the Dunkin' Donuts Center's Customer Survey for review. She said that responses to the survey are a good barometer of how the public views the building.

CONVENTION CENTER

Ms. Venturini recognized Mr. McGinn and asked that he address the Committee. Mr. McGinn presented the Convention Center's progress in meeting the goals of the 2009 Marketing Plan. Mr. McGinn stated that the Convention Center is close to meeting this year's revenue goals. He noted that the stand alone catering goal may be difficult to attain because people are cutting back on menu choices and the number of guests. Mr. McGinn reported on trade shows and conventions. He said that the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association is near to signing for a show in June, 2010 and adding a sister show, The Good Toy Group. Mr. McGinn said that United Natural Foods Northeast Tradeshow is looking at Providence or Hartford for their event. Mr. McGinn noted that this show was at one time held at the Convention Center and moved to MGM Grand. He said that they have since outgrown MGM Grand and we would love to have them return to Providence. Mr. McGinn noted that the Convention Center is looking forward to this year's Flower Show. He said that Boston will not hold a show this year and we are expecting to attract guests from the Boston area. Mr. McGinn reported on sales calls made in January and noted that some new prospects were

enthusiastic about our facility and would keep us in mind for their next events. Mr. McGinn reported on several new tentative food and beverage events. Mr. Muldoon thanked Mr. MacDonald for arranging for him to address the attendees of Building Trades Luncheon on February 5th. Mr. Muldoon said that he will speak to about 25 union leaders and talk to them about the Ambassador Program. He stated that since we are a union facility there is an opportunity to attract national business for the Convention Center and the destination. Mr. McGinn reported that there have been several site tours including The Rees Group, Inc. which is a third party meeting planner that may be a source of future events.

VMA

Steve Hahl was pleased to report that, in partnership with the Renaissance Hotel, Hasbro has contracted to occupy the Theater in April. Mr. Hahl reported that Mr. Potato Head will probably make an appearance. Mr. Hahl noted that responses to customer surveys indicate that parking is an issue with some patrons. He also noted that the survey is too long and that he will attempt to make it shorter in an effort to elicit more responses. Mr. Hahl stated that he had met with Kim Keough and the Festival Ballet to expand the Ballet's marketing efforts. He said that some good ideas were discussed. Ms. Keough stated that we have an opportunity for earned media attention. She reported that Providence Bruins hockey players will meet with the Prima Ballerina of Festival Ballet. The object of this

exercise will be to highlight the art, beauty and athleticism of both the hockey player and the dancer. Ms. Keough also noted the nice review the Philharmonic violinist received.

RI TOURISM

Mark Brodner was very pleased to report that the State had won a five star award from the American Academy of Hospitality Sciences. He noted that the Governor has asked that the plaque be placed on display in the Convention Center. The Committee congratulated Mr. Brodner. Mr. Brodner reported that the annual Tour Rhode Island tickets go on sale next week and reminded anyone that may be interested in participating to purchase their tour quickly because they sell out fast. Mr. Brodner noted that we need to get the word out regarding the value of tourism to Rhode Island. Ms. Venturini stated that 5% of the State's revenue comes from tourism. Mr. Hirsh suggested that the plaque be reproduced in a format that could be placed in windows or doors to hotels and restaurant. Mr. Brodner said that he would look into doing that.

NEWPORT CVB

Mr. Smith reported that Valentines Day weekend is huge in Newport. He also reported that Valentines Day weekend begins Newport's Winter Festival. Mr. Smith suggested that the Committee consider holding a future meeting in Newport.

Ms. Venturini asked Ms. Keough to address the Committee. Ms. Keough reported that she had prepared a report on the earned media for the second quarter on 2009. Ms. Keough stated that a quarterly report will be presented to the Committee with the results of all print media exposure that we did not pay for. Mr. Hirsh inquired if we would advertise the Flower Show in Boston. He said that since Boston will not have a show it might be a great opportunity to attract more attendees. Ms. Marzullo stated that the show's promoter is responsible for advertising.

Ms. Venturini asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Butler and seconded by Mr. Hirsh it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:55 pm